

## NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION CRITERIA

To be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), a historic-age resource must meet at least one of the four National Register Criteria and retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance. The following discussion defines the significant historical themes and associations set forth in the historic context for the development of highways in Texas and applies them to appropriate National Register Criteria. To possess significance under any of the National Register Criteria as part of this historic context, a resource must be associated with one or more of these themes.<sup>1094</sup> In addition, a resource must possess sufficient integrity to convey that significance. The degree to which a resource must retain integrity depends upon the property type and the reasons it is significant under any of the National Register Criteria. The *Registration Requirements* section of the report provides additional information regarding integrity requirements for each property type.

The scope of this study is limited to assessing significance associated with the development of highways in Texas. Resources located along the highway may possess significance for their association with other historic contexts that are outside the scope of this study, such as commercial development at the local level. In these instances, further research and development of the associated historic context will be required to fully evaluate the NRHP eligibility of the resource.

### CRITERION A

As defined by the National Park Service (NPS), historic resources may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A if they are “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.” For each time period within the context of the development of highways in Texas, the specific events and themes listed below are considered significant. Each theme is significant in its own right; although older themes may be rare, they are not necessarily more significant than recent trends, which often were common but had drastic and wide-ranging impacts upon the built environment. In order to meet National Register Criterion A, a resource must be associated with one or more of these events or themes and possess significance for that association. Furthermore, the resource must display physical features that are capable of illustrating the association with the significant historic event or theme.

## **EARLY TEXAS ROADS AND TRAILS: 1700–1880**

The historic context identifies significant themes within the period from 1700 to 1880 including:

- The development of Spanish missions that influenced early road patterns and subsequently affected the development of the named highways;
- Cattle trails, used to drive cattle to markets, that later evolved into named highways;
- The development of stagecoach routes along trails that influenced transportation patterns and the subsequent construction of the named highways; and
- Early construction of railroads along paths that played such a critical role in the alignments of future named highways.

It is anticipated that few, if any, extant resources associated with these themes will be identified adjacent to the highway during the field survey. If identified, these resources may be eligible under Criterion A in the area of Exploration/Settlement or Transportation.

## **COUNTY ROADS AND THE GOOD ROADS MOVEMENT: 1880–1916**

During the period from 1880 through 1916, significant themes include:

- Continued development of the railroad network, which influenced the alignments subsequently chosen for the construction of future named highways;
- The discovery of oil in Texas, which provided a source of low-cost fuel for automobiles and which contributed to the development of the road network that supported the movement of raw materials, equipment, and labor to oil fields;
- The important role that county governments played in the early development of the road network by issuing bonds to fund the construction of roads at the county level;
- The organization of the Good Roads movement and the creation of highway associations that lobbied government officials for better roads and highways and generated greater interest in and support for roads to the general public; and
- Early roadway planning inspired by the City Beautiful Movement and the advent of City Master Plans by landscape architects and urban planners.

## **INITIATION OF THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM: 1917–1932**

Themes that shaped the context of highway development from 1917 to 1932 are as follows:

- Training and mobilization for World War I that relied heavily on the construction of improved roads to access military installations and accommodate military convoys;
- The establishment and early road-building activities of the Texas Highway Department;
- The continued influence of highway associations to promote the construction and use of named highways;
- The new role that the state played in the development of a statewide network of highways that improved highways and ensured more consistent quality;
- The growing importance of professional trained and educated engineers in the development of innovative and standardized roadway designs and the use of higher quality and more durable materials to build highways and roads throughout the state;
- The use of state and federal funds as a new revenue source to construct highways integrated into the emerging state and federal highway systems;
- The increase of tourist travel using automobiles along the new state highway system and the development of new types of businesses and architectural forms catering to motorists that changed the physical character and landscape along many segments of the road, especially in more urban settings;
- The segregation of highway-oriented tourist facilities in the South in the Jim Crow era;
- The development of roadside landscaping and state parks; and
- The growing popularity and implementation of urban plans that attempted to control growth, development, and land-use patterns using tools such as zoning.

#### **DEPRESSION, MOBILIZATION, AND WAR: 1933–1944**

Themes that played a significant role in the historic context of highway development from 1933 to 1944 are:

- The effects of the Great Depression on the development of the highway system;
- The use of labor-intensive work-relief programs, such as the WPA, to construct and improve roads, roadside parks, and state parks;
- Rising automobile tourism along the named highways and the continued development of new architectural forms along roadsides;
- The Texas Centennial celebration, which drew tourists along the named highway and spurred construction of fairgrounds and tourist amenities, as well as landscaping, to beautify the roadside for the tourist influx;

- The segregation of highway-oriented tourist facilities in the South in the Jim Crow era;
- The use of commemorative markers along roadsides to inform travelers about the state's history and promote the Texas Centennial celebration;
- Mobilization in the late 1930s prior to World War II that resulted in the improvement of road/highway networks serving established and new military installations and industrial defense plants;
- Improvement of the highway network to support the war effort facilitating the movement of troops, goods, and war materiel; and
- Economic factors and rationing affecting the supply of gasoline and tires during the Depression and World War II.

#### **POSTWAR ROAD EXPANSION: 1945–1956**

Major themes within the historic context of highway development from 1945 to 1956 were:

- Military expansion at installations along named highways during the Cold War era;
- Continued operation of military-industrial complexes along named highways;
- Development of a farm-to-market road system linking rural areas with major markets and urban areas via improved primary and secondary highways;
- A growing middle class with more discretionary funds and vacation leave taking more automobile trips;
- The segregation of highway-oriented tourist facilities in the South in the Jim Crow era;
- Oil industry expansion, which spurred population growth and development along named highways;
- Suburbanization encouraged by the ease of commuting along the developing highway system;
- Increased traffic contributing to congestion along the named highways, especially in urban areas;
- The introduction of new highway designs and concepts, such as limited-access expressways or freeways, to improve safety and the flow of traffic;
- The advent of interregional highways as a precursor to the Interstate Highway System; and
- The growth and corporatization of the tourist industry, including the construction of corporate chain gas stations, hotels, and restaurants along named highways.

## **EFFECTS OF THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM: 1957–1980**

From 1957 through 1980, significant themes within the context of Texas highways included:

- The beginning of the Interstate Highway System;
- The incorporation of some segments of the named highways into the Interstate Highway System and the changing role of those other segments within state and local transportation patterns. As the Interstate Highway System was constructed, older alignments passing through downtowns often became business routes;
- Redevelopment patterns along roadsides in urban areas and new uses for older buildings;
- The expanded role of the federal government in the funding, designing, and overseeing of highway construction;
- The rise of trucking and industrial growth along highways and the resulting effects on land-development patterns;
- Continued growth and corporatization of the tourism industry, including the construction of corporate chain gas stations, hotels, and restaurants along the interstates that bypassed or supplanted the named highways;
- The segregation of highway-oriented tourist facilities in the South in the Jim Crow era;
- The decline of the tourism economy in towns bypassed by the interstate;
- Early development of heritage tourism efforts associated with the advent of travel trails during the 1960s;
- Economic concerns regarding travel and gas shortages in the 1970s; and
- The development of large-scale amusement parks and tourist attractions along interstates that closely followed the path of named highways.

## **CRITERION B**

National Register Criterion B recognizes resources “that are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past.” Although the historic context of highway development in Texas identified a number of significant individuals, it is unlikely that any of these individuals will have a direct link to roadside properties identified along historic named highways in Texas. Likewise, while some resources along the roadside may be associated with individuals who are significant within a different historic context, it is unlikely that these individuals will be significant within the context of highway development. Consequently, this study does not anticipate that it will identify resources that are eligible for the National Register under Criterion B along the historic named highways.

## **CRITERION C**

The National Park Service defines resources that meet National Register Criterion C as those “that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.” Significant roadway segments, bridges, and related structures may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of Engineering. Roadside buildings, like hotels, motels, or gas stations, that exemplify a recognizable architectural style may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Criterion C is applied most often to individual buildings and structures, but it also may apply to a historic district. Within the context of highway development in Texas, historic districts eligible under Criterion C may include groupings of auto-oriented resources and/or tourist-oriented resources that possess cohesive qualities of design although they lack individual distinction. Such historic districts likely would be eligible for listing under Criterion C in the area of Architecture or Community Planning and Development.

## **CRITERION D**

National Register Criterion D applies to resources “that have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.” This criterion typically applies to archeological sites. Because the scope of this study is limited to above-ground historic resources, identified resources will not be evaluated for their significance under Criterion D.

## **NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS**

The National Register Criteria ordinarily exclude the following resources from listing:

- Cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures;
- Properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes;
- Buildings or structures that have been moved from their original locations;
- Reconstructed historic buildings;
- Properties that are primarily commemorative in nature; and
- Other properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years.

However, National Register Criteria Considerations state that such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts or conform to the following criteria:

- A. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic importance. However, it is unlikely that religious properties will be evaluated under the context of historic highways in Texas.
- B. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or it is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a noteworthy person or event of the past.
- C. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life. However, it is unlikely that birthplaces will be evaluated under the context of historic highways in Texas.
- D. A cemetery that derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events. However, it is unlikely that cemeteries will be evaluated under the context of historic highways in Texas.
- E. A reconstructed building, when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived.
- F. A property primarily commemorative in intent of design, age, tradition, or symbolic value that has invested it with its own historical significance.
- G. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

The Development of Highways in Texas:  
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